

Beach Party Weighs in with Bridge Problem

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

Plans are progressing for the Fourth of July parade and beach party, organizers announced to selectmen this week, but they have run into a new problem: the state has reduced the weight limit for the Powder Point Bridge to 8,000 lbs.

The committee must figure out ways to work around this new weight limit as the buses and trolleys used to shuttle people from the high school to the beach will be over the limit. The beach party will take place on Saturday, July 3, from 4 to 10 p.m.

Committee co-chair Jamie MacNab and co-chair Joan Edgar asked selectmen for suggestions on how to handle this new glitch. The committee makes some money from the four trolleys, but mainly they are the best way to bring more people out to the beach, said Edgar.

"Most vehicles on the bridge are overweight," said MacNab. Large trucks can weigh 900 to 1,000 lbs. and the senior citizens' bus is 1,400 lbs., he said.

Selectman John Tuffy said selectmen couldn't do anything about changing the limit: "The weight limit is the weight limit," he said.

Department of Public Works Director Tom Daley said that last summer the state did an in-depth bridge analysis that included a dive team that examined the pilings. He received their report a few months ago and it shows that some pilings are deteriorating and the bridge will need to be fixed in places.

The 8,000 lb. limit is an every day, or "inventory" rating, said Daley, but the state has made an exception for fire trucks and other heavy emergency vehicles to cross the bridge when necessary.

The previous rating was 8,000 lbs., or 4 tons, for two-axle vehicles, 10 tons for three-axle vehicles and 15 tons for five-axle vehicles. The new rating is 4 tons for two axles, 6 tons for three axles, and 9 tons for five axles.

Selectman Betsy Sullivan suggested the trolleys drop people off at the west end of the bridge and then they could walk over to the beach. Edgar responded that many families bring their children and lots of their belongings to the beach party and that's why the trolleys are so convenient for them. Also, while walking the bridge to the party would be fine, coming back when children are tired and it is late is another matter, said Edgar.

Sullivan said the committee should promote parking at the Duxbury Beach Pavilion parking lot (Blakeman's), which is accessed from Marshfield. Tuffy suggested the committee set up a shuttle from that parking lot to the festivities in the

main parking lot. Another idea was to have some lighter vehicles, such as golf carts, for people with limited mobility to transfer them over the bridge after being dropped off by a trolley.

As in the past, Powder Point Avenue and King Caesar Rd. will be one-way for traffic beginning at 3 p.m.

MacNab said the beach party will offer some of the same events as in previous years, such as a crazy hat contest for children and bands that have played there with success, such as the Infracrations and Cheech and the Reggae Bubblers. His committee has been working to fine-tune the event every year, however.

Party-goers will find some things changed this year. The concession area will be moved to the over-flow parking area closer to the bridge. The portable toilets will also be moved to a new location for better access from the food court area. The Cornerstone Lodge will be the only food seller this year.

The bonfire will be the same size as the 2003 bonfire — 250 pallets, which is reduced from past years. The committee will be required to "baby sit" the bonfire the night before the party and the night after to prevent any vandalism to the unlit bonfire or danger to the public after the bonfire from the hot coals. The bonfire's placement will be determined by many factors including location of endangered bird species nests and the wind and weather conditions.

The committee cleans up after the event until 2 a.m. and then is back at 6 a.m. to continue their efforts.

As for the 112th Fourth of July parade, the biggest change this year will be the start time. The parade will begin at 1 p.m. instead of 2 p.m. This is

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because the Plymouth Parade starting time has been changed from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Traditionally, many of the bands and musical groups that are in the Duxbury parade are also in the Plymouth parade. The 1 pm start time should give the groups doing both parades enough time to make it to Plymouth.

The July 4th committee met on April 6 with the fire and police chiefs, the harbormaster, DPW director, director of inspectional services and the conservation administrator to address their concerns.

In a memo from that meeting, Fire Chief William Harriman applauded the committee.

"I believe that this committee has once again done a terrific job in putting this event together," wrote Harriman. "They provide a valuable community service and our residents are the clear benefactors of their efforts. They are to be commended for their dedication and commitment to our town and its citizens."

Tuffy and Sullivan voted unanimously to support the parade and party. Selectman Andre Martecchini was not present.

In other business, selectmen:

- Voted to support the plans

for the Duxbury Sprint Triathlon as presented by organizer Brian Noyes. The triathlon will take place on Saturday, September 25. New security measures will be in place to track each participant to make sure all of the 500 racers are accounted for at each leg of the race. Proceeds from the triathlon benefit the police PAL and DARE programs.

- Learned that sewer bills for the Bay Rd. and Snug Harbor shared septic systems will be going out to residents shortly, said Town Manager Rocco Longo.

- Approved a walk-a-thon for KidSave International for a new date of June 2.

- Approved a one-day liquor license for Friends of the Council on Aging for their June 7th golf tournament at the Duxbury Yacht Club.

- Learned from Harriman that the Duxbury Fire Department was featured in the trade magazine "Fire Apparatus Journal." Rob Tripp and Rob Reardon submitted the photos and the story about Duxbury's team. "I'm very proud of it," said Harriman.

- Were told by Harriman that the town's emergency team received "overall good grades" from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the emergency drill that took place on April 14.